

I can think of no one more qualified to spearhead this critically important endeavor than Richard Sklar. Mr. Sklar has had a distinguished 35 year career in private and public sector management. Prior to accepting this appointment, he has served as president and chief operating officer of O'Brien-Kreitzberg Inc. (OK), the oldest and largest "pure" project and construction management firm in the United States. OK is now managing over 100 major construction projects in the United States and abroad, from airports and rail systems to facilities for the Atlanta Olympics. Mr. Sklar served on the administration's transition team for the Agency for International Development during the administration's first 3 months, and then became a member of the Board of Directors of the Rus-

sian-American Enterprise Fund. He has continued to serve as an adviser to AID Administrator Brian Atwood and to Richard Morningstar, Coordinator for Assistance to the New Independent States. Mr. Sklar has built and led two businesses, both world leaders in the construction industry. In addition, he served in major public management roles for the city of San Francisco. Mr. Sklar was an officer in the U.S. Army artillery following his graduation as a mechanical engineer from Cornell University in 1956.

I am deeply grateful that Mr. Sklar has accepted this appointment, and for his willingness to serve our Nation in helping to build an enduring peace in Bosnia.

Remarks on the Israeli Elections and an Exchange With Reporters May 30, 1996

The President. Good morning. My goodness, the sun is out. I'd like to make just a couple of brief comments about the election in Israel last night.

First of all, it was a cliffhanger. A lot of us were up late waiting for the returns, but I want to just make a couple of points. The United States—first, we don't know how—we don't have final returns. We have to wait for the postal ballots to be cast, counted.

Whatever the results, the United States will continue its policy of support for the people of Israel, for the democratic process there, and for the process of peace. And our policy will be the same. If Israel is prepared to take risks for peace, we are determined to do our best to reduce the risks and increase the security of those who do that.

I was especially encouraged in the closing days of the campaign that both parties and both candidates expressed, in different ways, but still a clear commitment to continue the peace process. So that is my hope; that's what I hope will come out of this election. And we'll all just have to sit now and wait until the final ballots are counted.

Q. Do you believe Mr. Netanyahu would not restart settlements in the West Bank, would not go ahead with negotiations with Syria? There's a dramatic difference in his approach.

The President. Well, there's been a difference in what they say their approaches are, but I was actually quite interested in the comments that he made about this, particularly in the last days of the election. I think we have to wait and see.

I would first of all say, let's wait until all the ballots are in, until we see who voted how and what the final outcome is. But the first big leg of the whole process of peace in the Middle East was completed by one of Mr. Netanyahu's Likud predecessors. So we just have to wait and see.

They certainly have a lively, interesting democracy. And they showed it again yesterday, and the rest of us should support that. And I would hope that we would have that kind of turnout in our country this November. I hope that percentage of our voters shows up. I think they had over two-thirds of the overall voters turn out. And I hope that—and maybe even higher.

They have made their decision. Now we have to wait for a while to see what it is. And then afterward they will have to chart a course, and then we'll see where we go from there.

Q. Do you want results that close?

The President. No. I hope they won't be that close, but I hope that we'll have that many people voting. I like the turnout. And I like

the vigorous involvement. I like the debate. I thought it—you know, it was a very stimulating thing for them and, you know, it was a difficult, challenging election for the people of Israel and, you know, we'll see. I think all of us who watched the returns last night and watched the reports coming in were impressed by the vigor of the democracy and by the determination to participate. And now, you know, they have a very diverse society, and they're trying to find ways to integrate all the various elements of their society. It was very impressive to me what happened.

And so I'm going to wait for the votes to come in and a winner to be declared and the government to be announced, and then we'll see where we go from there.

Press Secretary Mike McCurry. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, does the closeness of the vote make it difficult for anyone to lead? What is the message?

The President. Let's wait a while. Let's see what the vote is, and we'll see what the message is. I don't want to be an instantaneous commentator, but I'll think some more about it and see if I can answer that question.

Q. How late were you up?

The President. Until I found out what all the counted votes were last night, about 1 o'clock.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:20 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for New Orleans, LA. In his remarks, he referred to Binyamin Netanyahu, Likud Party candidate for Prime Minister in Israel.

Remarks to the Women's International Convention of the Church of God in Christ in New Orleans, Louisiana May 30, 1996

The President. I'm having such a good time, I hate to interrupt it. [*Laughter*] Please be seated.

Audience member. We love you, Mr. President!

The President. Thank you. Thank you.

Bishop Owens, you don't have to calm this crowd for me. I like it the other way. Mother Crouch, thank you for letting me come to your meeting. Now, I know whose meeting this is. And I know that this is supposed to be about the spirit, but if you will forgive me, this is also one fine-looking crowd today.

Last night my wife called me to check in, as we always do when one of us is away from home, and she was on her way to California. And Hillary said, "Well, what are you doing tomorrow?" And I said "Well, I'm going to the Women's Convention of the Church of God in Christ." And she said, "Well, you finally figured out where the power is."

The bishops will find a way to make me pay for that, I think, but I had a good time. [*Laughter*]

I'm glad to be here with some other friends today. I brought two of Louisiana's Congress-

men down here with me, Congressman Bill Jefferson and Congressman Cleo Fields. I'm honored to be here with them. Many of these bishops here have had me in their churches—Bishop Brooks, Bishop Patterson, Bishop Blake, Bishop Quick. I've been in their churches. My friend Bishop Clark from Pennsylvania; Bishop Winbush. Bishop Hamilton gave us a good prayer and got us started off well. I thank Bishop Clemons, Bishop Haynes, Bishop Anderson, all the distinguished leaders of this great church.

I thank that Women's Mass Choir and Natalie Green. It's too bad she has no range to her voice, isn't it? [*Laughter*] Let's give them another hand. She was wonderful, and they were wonderful. [*Applause*]

And I thank Bernard Johnson for coming out here on no notice to play. Bishop Owens and I were sitting there, and I said, "Bishop, I love all this music, but where's that man that played the saxophone for me in 1993 in Memphis? I want to hear him again."

I want to say a special word of thanks, if I might claim a personal privilege, to the two bishops here from my native State of Arkansas, without whom I might well not be here today.